

CONFERENCE OF THE EIGHTEEN-NATION COMMITTEE
ON DISARMAMENT

ENDC/PV.403
15 April 1969
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COLLECTION

FINAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE FOUR HUNDRED AND THIRD MEETING

held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva
on Tuesday, 15 April 1969, at 10.30 a.m.

Chairman:

Mr. H. JAROSZEK

(Poland)

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PRESENT AT THE TABLE

Brazil:

Mr. S.A. FRAZAO
Mr. C.A. de SOUZA e SILVA
Mr. L.F. PALMEIRA LAMPREIA
Mr. J. NOGUEIRA FILHO

Bulgaria:

Mr. K. CHRISTOV
Mr. M. KARASSIMEONOV
Mr. B. KONSTANTINOV
Mr. I. PEINIRDJIEV

Burma:

U KYAW MIN

Canada:

Mr. G. IGNATIEFF
Mr. A.G. CAMPBELL
Mr. J.R. MORDEN

Czechoslovakia:

Mr. T. LAHODA
Mr. V. VAJNAR
Mr. V. SAFAR

Ethiopia:

Mr. A. ZELLEKE

India:

Mr. M.A. HUSAIN
Mr. N. KRISHNAN
Mr. K.P. JAIN

Italy:

Mr. R. CARACCIOLO
Mr. F. LUCIOLI OTTIERI
Mr. R. BORSARELLI
Mr. U. PESTALOZZA

Mexico:

Miss E. AGUIRRE
Mr. M. TELLO
Mr. H. CARDENAS RODRIGUEZ

Nigeria:

Mr. C.O. HOLLIST
Mr. L.A. MALIKI

Poland:

Mr. H. JAROSZEK

Mr. K. ZYBYLSKI

Romania:

Mr. N. ECOBESCO

Mr. V. CONSTANINESCO

Mr. V. TARZIORU

Sweden:

Mrs. A. MYRDAL

Mr. A. EDELSTAM

Mr. O. DAHLEN

Mr. T. WULFF

Union of Soviet Socialist
Republics:

Mr. A. ROSHCHIN

Mr. I.I. TCHEPROV

Mr. N.S. KISHILOV

Mr. V.A. USTINOV

United Arab Republic:

Mr. H. KHALLAF

Mr. O. SIRRY

Mr. E.S. EL REEDY

Mr. Y. RIZK

United Kingdom:

Mr. F. MULLEY

Mr. I.F. PORTER

Mr. N.N. HILLIER-FRY

Miss V. HUGHES

United States of America:

Mr. A.S. FISHER

Mr. C. GLEYSTEN

Mr. W. GIVEN

Mr. R.L. McCORMACK

Special Representative of the
Secretary-General

Mr. D. PROTITCH

Deputy Representative of the
Secretary-General

Mr. W. EPSTEIN

1. The CHAIRMAN (Poland): I declare open the 403rd plenary meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament.
2. Before proceeding with our business today I should like to welcome the leader of the United Kingdom delegation, Mr. Fred Mulley, who is back with us. I should also like to welcome the new representative of Mexico, Miss Elisa Aguirre, who will, I understand, take charge of the Mexican delegation.
3. I have been charged with the task of reading the following statement by the co-Chairmen of our Committee which they have jointly agreed:

"In response to the recommendations of several members of this Committee, the co-Chairmen have agreed to suggest that an informal meeting of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament be held at 10.30 a.m., Wednesday, 16 April. The co-Chairmen believe that at this meeting the members would wish to discuss procedural matters, the programme of work of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, the advisability of holding further informal meetings to discuss specific items on the agenda of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament, or any other subject.

"The Chairman of today's meeting has been asked to serve as Chairman of the informal meeting tomorrow".

I think that the members of the Committee will have taken due note of that statement of the co-Chairmen.

4. Mr. KHALLAF (United Arab Republic): At the outset of my statement I should like to welcome our new co-Chairman, Ambassador Gerard Smith of the United States, as well as Ambassador Frazão of Brazil, Ambassador Ignatieff of Canada and Ambassador Klusák of Czechoslovakia. I should like also to welcome back to this Conference Ambassador Fisher of the United States, Mr. Mulley of the United Kingdom, Miss Aguirre of Mexico, Mr. Protitch, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and all our old and good friends gathered around this table.
5. After a recess of more than six months the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament is once again resuming its activity in the search for ways and means of transmuting the deep and ever-growing concern of the world at the gigantic strides in the field of armaments into concrete and reassuring achievements on disarmament. During that period the General Assembly, at its twenty-third session, has taken stock, as usual, of our accomplishments and I believe we are all aware how severely our endeavours here were then judged.

(Mr. Khallaf, United Arab Republic)

6. The General Assembly adopted several resolutions (ENDC/237) asking us, once again, to make renewed efforts towards achieving substantial progress and to report back. Although those resolutions resemble, in essence and in language, all those that have been transmitted to our Conference in previous years, the proceedings in the First Committee leave no room for misinterpreting the utmost urgency of their character. That is clearly reflected, too, in the message of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to this Conference (ENDC/PV.395, para.4).
7. The ever-increasing pace of the nuclear armaments race makes it incumbent upon us, furthermore, to exert a very special effort during our current session to stem the nuclear tide and to take advantage to the fullest possible extent of all propitious conditions as they emerge on the international plane.
8. We must always keep in mind that there are still many factors which stubbornly oppose the trend towards a world at peace, and that it is a major crisis, more than anything else, which might confront us suddenly with the likelihood of a nuclear holocaust. It is indeed such a possibility that should convince us of the urgency of ridding ourselves of a weapon that has become more an instrument for international suicide than a means of national protection.
9. For all those reasons my delegation whole-heartedly welcomes the message of Chairman Kosygin to this Conference, and we join him in his expression of hope that
"... the activities of the Eighteen-Nation Committee [may] be guided at all times by the peoples' desire that any international tensions shall be relaxed and world peace ensured". (ENDC/238, p. 2)
10. We have also taken note with gratification of the contents of President Nixon's letter to Ambassador Smith, in particular his statement that:
"Our immediate objective is to leave behind the period of confrontation and to enter an era of negotiation". (ENDC/239*)
11. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (ENDC/226*) is slowly feeling its way towards application. The number of signatories is steadily increasing, and so is the number of countries which have deposited their instruments of ratification. In that connexion the delegation of the United Arab Republic cannot but welcome the recent decision by the United States Senate to ratify the Treaty. We are convinced that this important step will have a beneficial impact. We welcome also the statements made in this Committee by several delegations to the effect that their respective countries have started the process of ratification of this important multilateral agreement.

(Mr. Khallaf, United Arab Republic)

12. All these are very encouraging signs; yet we must note that the entry into force of the Treaty is still a long way off and that some signatures are still missing. That has had the effect of deferring the application of this instrument of peace, which aims at limiting the number of nuclear-weapon countries, seeks to promote close co-operation between its parties in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and is rightly considered as a first step in the direction of ending the nuclear arms race and achieving nuclear disarmament.

13. The United Arab Republic -- indeed, the whole of the Middle East and far beyond it -- notes that a certain country which has achieved notoriety for its periodic acts of military aggression, as well as for its permanent defiance of the international community and persistent refusal to implement the resolutions of the United Nations, has so far refused to sign the non-proliferation Treaty. I believe I need not dwell on the implications of such a refusal, which is clearly brandished for the purpose of exerting illegal pressure to obtain political and military advantages. The lasting threat of such conduct to peace and security in the region and beyond it is, I am sure, apparent to one and all.

14. Thus we must not delay unduly the bringing into force of the Treaty, which is necessary to encourage all of us to take practical steps in the field of disarmament proper. In my statement here on 15 August 1968 I pointed out that it was advisable that this Committee should continue to keep a watchful eye on the evolution towards full and universal implementation of the Treaty (ENDC/PV.390, para.30). In our view this Conference is not only concerned with negotiating and drafting treaties pertaining to disarmament but also, and perhaps above all, responsible for ascertaining that all measures agreed upon here are actually carried out.

15. On the same day that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature -- that is, on 1 July of last year -- the Soviet Union and the United States announced their readiness to enter into bilateral talks on the limitation and subsequent reduction of means of delivery of strategic weapons. On different occasions the United Arab Republic, together with all other countries, has welcomed that initiative. However, we are concerned at the fact that almost nine months have elapsed and these talks are still awaiting the green light in order to get under way.

(Mr. Khellaf, United Arab Republic)

16. The United Arab Republic sincerely believes that those negotiations are of such far-reaching significance that no event outside their scope, whether past, present or future, should be allowed to interfere with their progress. Indeed, we should always keep before our eyes the much-needed benevolent effect that an agreement on strategic weapons between the nuclear super-Powers could have on the international climate as well as on our work in this Conference. We sincerely believe that both reason and realism dictate the need urgently to tackle this particularly difficult problem.

17. In the months to come it will be our duty to try very hard to break some of the many links in the long chain of measures that lead up to the production and eventual use of the nuclear weapon. We must interrupt the process of nuclear armament. We can no longer consider it sufficient to continue to add new non-armament agreements to those already concluded and to delimit further the areas where nuclear weapons are supposedly not to be introduced, while witnessing, helplessly and in horror, the continued development and deployment of even more sophisticated weapons around those same regions. We must cease contenting ourselves with moving only on the periphery of the problem and must begin to come to direct grips with it.

18. With all that in mind, my delegation observes with satisfaction that much basic preparatory work has been done to help the Conference to embark on its difficult task. We have an agenda which was unanimously agreed upon at our last session (ENDC/236, p.3) in which priority for the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament has been clearly established. We are seized of a number of proposals and suggestions from previous sessions to which must now be added two documents of significance, namely, the draft treaty on prohibition of the use for military purposes of the seabed and the ocean floor and the subsoil thereof submitted by the Soviet Union (ENDC/240) and a working paper with suggestions as to possible provisions of a treaty banning underground nuclear weapon tests submitted by Sweden (ENDC/242). An abundant volume of work of a highly delicate nature is thus awaiting our attention.

19. This particular aspect of our work, namely, its volume and its essence, leads me to express a few thoughts concerning the way we could organize our work so as to derive maximum benefit from our endeavours at the current and future sessions. The importance of this particular point has been recognized by many other delegations which have put forward interesting ideas meriting our attention. They are a testimony to the sincere desire of their authors to see our work here proceed in an orderly and clearly defined

(Mr. Khallaf, United Arab Republic)

manner. Indeed, it is imperative that we should dispose wisely of our time, our thoughts and our energies, all of which have their limits, and bring them to bear on certain items of recognized priority instead of wasting them on a random approach to our work.

20. At the same time we should take into account the influence on our endeavours here of environmental factors, especially those of a political nature which may prevail during a given period, without, however, gauging them in an exaggerated manner. Yet if we were to decide to draw up a plan in the full sense of the word, or even to try to agree on some form of a tight package deal encompassing all measures of disarmament, we would face difficulties arising from the impossibility of being able beforehand to evaluate the unforeseeable. Even assuming that we might succeed in setting up such a plan or such a package deal, I submit that we would face great difficulties in implementing it in the future because of its intrinsic rigidity which would, quite unnecessarily, limit our freedom of movement and adaptability. In other words, what we need when we consider the organization of our work is adequate flexibility and realism. That is why we believe that instead of setting up a detailed and precise programme for the future we should limit ourselves to the search for a harmonious approach to our task based on prevailing political considerations, security interests and the technical relationship between the various measures of disarmament. In doing so we should strive to strike a fair balance between the interests of the various nuclear-weapon countries, as well as between the interests of the latter countries on the one hand and those of the non-nuclear-weapon States on the other.

21. Speaking from the practical point of view, my delegation believes that at this juncture we should not spend too much of the limited time available to us at this session on planning and co-ordinating our thoughts. As a matter of fact, we are convinced that it might be more to the purpose to devote the bulk of our current endeavours to a consideration of the many documents which have been submitted and which deal with an underground test ban, demilitarization of the sea-bed and ocean floor, the non-use of nuclear weapons, and chemical and bacteriological weapons. If we were to succeed during this session in achieving tangible progress and effective results on those measures and if, in addition, the bilateral talks on strategic weapons had got under way, then this year, 1969, might well be considered the most fruitful one in the history of disarmament.

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22. It has been suggested that we should increase the number of our official meetings and that some unofficial meetings should be arranged too. That proposal seems to be reasonable and we are inclined to support it -- that is, when our present two meetings a week prove insufficient or when a particular item requires our concerted efforts. This has been done before in a limited way and it could be repeated in the future. It seems to us, however, that what is of basic importance is not merely to increase the number of our meetings but indeed to discharge our duties.

23. As for unofficial meetings, these could prove useful in certain instances. The topic for such meetings should be decided upon early enough to allow delegations to prepare themselves adequately. However, this should not distract us from continuing our official meetings at which statements are put on record, in accordance with the procedure adopted so far.

24. In the field of the cessation of the nuclear arms race our preference goes to the question of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. This is a position which we share with the overwhelming majority of countries. So far our discussions in this Committee, while assisting in clarifying the issues involved, have remained markedly sterile. Therefore we cannot but welcome the Swedish initiative in submitting its working paper and we hope that a new and much-needed impetus will thus be given to our deliberations here on this particularly urgent problem. While we are not as yet prepared to comment in substance on the various provisions of that interesting document we should like nevertheless to express certain preliminary thoughts and to put some questions the clarification of which could assist us in understanding more clearly the issue under consideration.

25. Article II of the Swedish working paper deals with the difficult problem of verification. It is clear that much deep thought and much effort have gone into that article, which merits our closest scrutiny before we comment upon it. Its provisions must be studied separately as well as weighed as a whole. Basically they revolve around two main and combined elements: the use of national means of detection and identification and the co-operation in good faith of the States parties to the treaty and especially of those which are directly involved in a given event requiring verification. This makes us wonder how these provisions could work satisfactorily in cases in which co-operation

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in good faith between such parties would be very difficult or even impossible to achieve, bearing in mind the fact that it is particularly in such cases that profound suspicion and numerous doubts would arise as to the conduct of one of the parties.

26. Paragraph 3 of article I deals with the question of peaceful nuclear explosions and we are giving careful consideration to its implications in regard to the provision contained in article V of the non-proliferation Treaty which deals with the same subject. We believe that it is self-evident that this important subject should receive identical treatment in both these treaties.

27. The delegation of the United Arab Republic deems it important that we study seriously and in depth all aspects of the Swedish working paper in the hope that a complete meeting of minds can soon be reached on the provisions of a treaty banning all underground nuclear tests. We shall co-operate with all delegations towards achieving that end. However, should the conclusion of such a treaty prove impossible in spite of this, we should look for a provisional solution which could answer our common purpose for the time being, if only in an incomplete manner. We expect that in the meantime work will continue unabated on promoting further international scientific and technical co-operation in the field of seismological research and identification techniques.

28. We give next priority to the question of prohibiting the use of nuclear weapons. This item should receive our urgent attention. It forms the last, the ultimate, link in the chain of nuclear disarmament. If the use of these weapons could somehow be prevented a great step would have been taken towards relieving the world of a terrible nightmare. We realize that the prohibition of the use of nuclear weapons must receive, first and foremost, the full backing of all countries, and especially of all the nuclear Powers. Therefore we invite them to give renewed thought to this problem and hope that they will respond positively to the legitimate demand aimed at prohibiting the use of these weapons for all time.

29. The question of a cut-off of production of fissionable material for use in nuclear weapons and its transfer to peaceful purposes has not received attention in this Conference for a long time. We have noted the great importance attached by the United States to this particular measure and are at present examining with care the statement

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(ENDC/PV.401, paras. 5-17) made by its representative, Ambassador Fisher, on 8 April 1969 in which he set out in detail his Government's position. My delegation hopes to set forth its views on the subject in due course.

30. The countries of this world, including my own, have pronounced themselves unequivocally in favour of the utilization of the sea-bed and ocean floor exclusively for peaceful purposes. This unanimous stand is clearly reflected in the General Assembly resolution, which speaks of "the reservation exclusively for peaceful purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor ..." (resolution 2467 (XXIII), para. 3)

31. The United Arab Republic has consistently taken the view that all military uses of that environment should be prohibited, and we stand ready to give this universal expression of intent the appropriate and contractual form which could be subscribed to by all other States.

32. The timely presentation by the Soviet Union of a draft treaty on the prohibition of the use for military purposes of the sea-bed and the ocean floor is a welcome initiative which will no doubt focus our attention on the essentials and the particulars of this important problem.

33. My Government is now attentively studying this draft. We are carefully examining its scope, its legal implications and its provisions for verification in the light of the explanations given by the representative of the Soviet Union (ENDC/PV.395, paras., 80-88, and ENDC/PV.400, paras. 2-36).

34. However, at this juncture I wish to state that my delegation considers the Soviet draft to be a sound basis for discussion and negotiation. We feel that this draft reflects our basic position on the problem, which is to prohibit all military weapons and military activity on the sea-bed. The broader the prohibition on which we reach agreement, the more successful shall we be in gathering in the fruits of our peaceful endeavours in this new environment.

35. As for the question of verification measures, in which the less powerful States have a vital interest too, these need to be workable for one and all, and thus of such a nature as to give all countries the peace of mind and sense of security to which they are entitled.

36. Much hard work is awaiting us and much good will is expected from all of us around this table if we are to present to the next General Assembly a report of substance. As far as my delegation is concerned, we are prepared to work unrelentingly in order to make this year's session a successful one.

The Conference decided to issue the following communiqué:

"The Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament today held its 403rd plenary meeting in the Palais des Nations, Geneva, under the chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador H. Jaroszek, representative of Poland.

"A statement was made by the representative of the United Arab Republic.

"The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 17 April 1969, at 10.30 a.m."

The meeting rose at 11.15 a.m.